

REMARKS

Claims 1-56 have been canceled.

New claims 57-80 are presented for prosecution.

Claims 57-80 remain pending in the application. Of these, claims 57 and 67 are independent apparatus claims.

Claims 46-56 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Woo U.S. 3,943,932 (Woo '932). and under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Strasser et al. 4,838,282 (Strasser '282) in view of Woo '932. As defined by new independent claim 57, the cited references do not teach or suggest, alone or in combination, a tool in which a composite handle comprises a first portion coupled to a trocar and second portion coupled to a cannula and in which the second portion has a size that is less than the size of the first portion. Dependent claims 58-66 further define the features of independent claim 57 and are therefore also believed to be allowable over the cited references.

As defined by new independent claim 67, the cited references do not teach or suggest; alone or in combination, a tool in which a first handle mates with a second handle when the first handle is in either of a first position and a second position relative to the second handle when the first functional instrument is engaged with the second functional instrument to form a composite handle. 'Strasser '282 discloses a stylet and cannula system in which the stylet and cannula are unidirectional mating (see col. 2, line 64 to col. 3, line 3). That is, the stylet can be inserted into the cannula lumen in one direction only (see col. 2, lines 26-33). Similarly, Woo '932 discloses a unidirectional mating system in which depending portion 27 of flange 26 on needle heed 22 fits within notch 17 of holder 11. Dependent claims 68-80 further define the features of independent claim 67 and are therefore also believed to be allowable over the cited references.

Reconsideration in view of the foregoing amendments and remarks and allowance of claims 57-80 is respectfully requested.

Respectfully Submitted,

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